

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8988
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2509

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BG
SUBJ: AWAMI LEAGUE DEBATES WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION; DEADLINE FOR NOMINATION
MAY 2; NEW ELECTION SECRETARY NAMED

REF: DACCA 2495

1. WHILE MANY OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN IN
EXECUTIVE SESSION THE PAST FEW DAYS, MOST OBSERVERS ARE WATCHING
THE AWAMI LEAGUE, WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE PUT ASIDE ITS
FACTIONAL DIFFERENCES FOR THE MOMENT TO DISCUSS PARTY STRATEGY.
IN A STATEMENT APRIL 23, THE AL SAID THAT PREVIOUSLY "A
PARTICULAR FORM OF GOVERNMENT", HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO MEET
THE DEMANDS OF "A GIVEN SITUATION" MAKING SHEIKH MUJIB THE
PRESIDENT OF THE NATION ON THE BASIS OF THE FOUR STATE
PRINCIPLES OF NATIONALISM, DEMOCRACY, SOCIALISM AND SECU-
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LARISM. HOW, HOWEVER, THE STIUATION HAS CHANGED AND THE
NATION NEEDS A PARLIAMENTARY, RATHER THAN A PRESIDENTIAL,
TYPE OF GOVERNMENT. THE AL CRITICIZED THE SUDDEN AND ARBI-
TRARY DECISION TO HOLD A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, SAYING
THAT "TO HOLD AN ELECTION WITHIN 42 DAYS" IS AN
"EYEWASH". THE PARTY DEMANDED FULL WITHDRAWAL OF MARTIAL
LAW, RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND FREEDOM OF THE

PRESS AS PRE-CONDITIONS TO HOLDING A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

2. THE STATEMENT SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT THE AL WILL NOT CONTEST ELECTIONS, BUT IT PROBABLY DOES NOT YET REPRESENT THE FINAL POSITION OF THE PARTY. THERE HAS BEEN SOME TALK ALSO OF PUTTING UP DR. KAMAL HOSSAIN, ONE OF SHEIKH MUJIB'S SUPPORTERS WHO WAS FOREIGN MINISTER UNTIL THE ASSASSINATION, WHEN HOSSAIN TOOK UP RESIDENCE AT OXFORD. HOSSAID PASSED THROUGH DACCA LAST WEEK "TO VISIT HIS AILING MOTHER," AS HE TOLD NEWSMEN, WHILE EN ROUTE TO A CONFERENCE IN JAKARTA. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD RETURN TO DACCA AFTER THE JAKARTA MEETING.

3. NONE OF THE PARTIES WILL HAVE MUCH TIME TO MAKE A DECISION, AS THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER, JUSTICE A.K.M. NURAL ISLAM, ANNOUNCED APRIL 22 THAT THE DEADLINE FOR FILING PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PAPERS WILL BE MAY 2 WITH THE LAST DAY FOR WITHDRAWING NOMINATION MAY 7. A SHORT PRESS NOTE ALSO INDICATED THAT FULL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, EXCEPT PROCESSIONS, WILL BE ALLOWED DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

4. IN ANOTHER ANNOUNCEMENT, ONE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MORE SENIOR (AND HIGHLY TALENTED) BUREAUCRATS, KAZI JALALUDDIN AHMED, HAS BEEN APPOINTED SECRETARY OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION. HE HAD BEEN ACTING AS SECRETARY, PARLIAMENT SECRETARIAT, A POST WITH FEW DUTIES WHICH
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ALLOWED HIM TO SERVE AS A KEY "TROUBLE-SHOOTER" (E.G., ON THE PROBLEMS WITH BURMA). HE CAN BE EXPECTED, WITH NURAL ISLAM, TO RUN A TIGHT ELECTION.
SCHNEIDER

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